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SALI FESTIVALS
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- (1) Dr. Radhakumud Mookerji Lucknow University
(March 31, 1945)
- (2) Sri Jayachandra Vidyalkar, Banaras
(April 10, 1946).
- (3) Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar,
(April 14, 1947).
- (4) Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan
(April 21, 1948)
- (5) Dr. S. C. Sarkar, Patna (April 11, 1949).
- (6) Dr. A. S. Altekar, Patna University
(March 31, 1950)

ANNAS FOUR ONLY

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Friends and Fellow admirers of Vaisali.

I deem it a great honour to have this opportunity of paying my tribute and respect to the memory and achievements of ancient Vaisali, which not only played a great part in shaping the history and culture of ancient India but also served, and will continue to serve, as a beacon light to our country for several centuries. The five addresses which you have so far heard on the day of this Annual Festival as well as the learned papers that have been published in the Vaisali Abhinandan Grantha have already familiarised you with the important aspects of the known history of Vaisali. I need not therefore, recapitulate them here. It would be well worth while for us however to take a stock of the work that remains to be done in this connection.

It is a matter of joy and congratulation that the Vaisali Sangha should have taken one step forward this year by organising scientific excavations at Vaisali. It may be pointed out that during the course of the present year excavations are being carried out only at two other places in our vast country, one at Kausambi under the auspices of the Allahabad University and the other at Shishupalgarh under the auspices of the Archaeological department. The achievement of the Vaisali Sangha in this respect cannot but be admired. It is a matter of satisfaction that the Sangha has received valuable co-operation in this work from Mr. Krishnadeva, the Superintendent, Central Circle, Archaeological Survey and his staff. I would however point out that under the new Constitution Archaeology has become a concurrent subject and the Bihar State Government must come forward to take its own share of responsibility in this connection. If the history of Bihar, which has played so glorious a part in the growth and evolution of Indian culture, is to be properly reconstructed, the province has to be properly explored and several promising sites have got to be excavated. The Government of Bihar, the proposed Bihar Research Institute, the University of Patna and the Archaeological Department can so cooperate that within the next few years the entire province will be fully explored from the Archaeological point of view, and scientific excavations on a wide scale will be undertaken at least for a couple of months at one important site or the other every year. I am confident that this hope will not be a mere dream, for I have no doubt that our Chief Minister and Education Minister will never allow grass to grow under their feet. They will so organise the whole affair that the State of Bihar will rank first in India in Archaeological and Historical researches. The University of Patna will be always glad to undertake its own quota of work in this project.

THE GAPS IN VAISALI HISTORY.

There is no doubt that the history of Vaisali is a source of great inspiration not only to Bihar but to the whole of India. It is, therefore, very unfortunate that there should be so many gaps in it. It would be desirable to draw particular attention to them, as we have now started to exca-

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vate the city sites Excavations are expected to throw no particular light upon the pre-Buddhist history of the city, though it is not impossible that we may be able to get the trace of some of the Chaityas revered by the Lichchhavis before the rise of Buddhism. We hardly get any notices of the Lichchhavis after the annexation of their state by Ajatasatru. It is however, improbable that the Lichchhavis should have submitted to the imperialistic administration for a long time. It is not improbable that they may have reasserted their independence when the power of the Haryanka Dynasty declined. Under the Nandas and the Mauryas, they must have again recognised the imperial sway of Pataliputra, but it is very likely that they enjoyed local autonomy under them, as did the Yaudheyas and the Arjunayanas under the Guptas. If we are successful in spotting out a Maurya site and assiduous in excavating it, we may probably get a flood of light on the history of the Lichchhavis under the Mauryas. We may find that Vaisali was then a busy and prosperous centre of a Provincial Government under the Nandas and the Mauryas, as it was under the Guptas at a later period.

REVIVAL OF THE REPUBLIC

The power of Pataliputra declined rapidly after the death of Pushyamiitra Sunga, and a number of provinces became independent. I would not be surprised if the excavations proved that Lichchhavis had become an independent Republic in c. 100 B.C. and continued to be the same for nearly 150 years. The Manusmriti, which was probably composed during this interval, refers to the Lichchhavis as powerful Kshatriyas, though fallen to a low state on account of the non-performance of the Sanskaras and the non-invitation to Brahmanas for their religious rites. This would tend to show that the Lichchhavis were mostly Jains or Buddhists at this time, but still famous for their military prowess. They must have reverted back to their republican form of the Government and it is not unlikely that they may have begun to issue coins, as did the contemporary, republics of northern India. We have reached the Sunga level at Raja Vishal-ka Garh, and if further and extensive excavations are carried out there, I expect that a number of the problems of the Lichchhavi history pertaining to this dark period will be solved. The so-called Panchala coins have been attributed to the Sungas by one school of thought. So far they have never been found in Bihar, the central seat of their power. We must try to ascertain whether we get any of these coins in the Sunga stratum of the Vaisali ruins. If they are absent, the issuers of the Panchala coins may have to be differentiated from the 'Sungas.

KUSHANA RULE AT VAISALI

There is a persistent Jain tradition to the effect that there was a period of Saka rule at Pataliputra when their chiefs bearing the title of the Murundas ruled over the city. The widowed sister of one Murunda king is said to have become a Jain nun (Abhidhanarajendra, Vol. II p. 726), another Murunda king is said to have been himself a Jain, (Ibid, Vol. IX, p. 1739).

What little I have recently seen of the stray coin finds at Vaisali tends to confirm this tradition. The local museum has a large number of Kushana copper coins mostly issued by Kanishka. Their stratification is not known, and it is not impossible that they may have come to Vaishali through traders or pilgrims. But pilgrims or traders do not usually carry copper coins over long distances and I am inclined to think that the Kushana

copper coins found at Vaisali tend to show that the city had been conquered by the Kushanas under the leadership of Kanishka. If extensive excavations are carried out at Raja-Vishal-ka Garh, we may come across a large number of Kushan coins, mostly of Kanishka in the pre-Gupta stratum.

Such a discovery will confirm the Jain tradition of the Murunda rule at Pataliputra and will also explain the emergence of the Puri-Kushana type of Orissa. The recent discovery of a hoard of 300 Kushana coins at Buxar for which we are indebted to Mr. S.V. Sohoni I.C.S., also tends to show that Kanishka was for some time ruling over southern Bihar. His Viceroy Khara-pallana, who is known to be governing at Banaras in 81 A.D., probably supervised the administration of Bihar as well. Or our excavations may reveal the existence of another Kushana viceroyalty either at Pataliputra or at Vaisali.

EXPULSION OF KUSHANAS

The Lichchhavis of Vaisali must have taken a leading part in expelling the Kushanas soon after the death of Kanishka, as did the other republics of India in the north-west. If no coins of Huvishka are found in Vaisali ruins, we may presume that the Lichchhavis regained their independence during his reign. It, however, appears that local Kushana or Saka chiefs continued to rule at Pataliputra longer than at Vaisali. Excavations will probably show that the Lichchhavi republic continued to flourish from c. 150 to 320 A.D. It is quite likely that it may have issued its own coins as did the other contemporary republics. I would not be surprised if new discoveries show that the reverse legend Lichhavayah on the coins of Chandragupta I was borrowed or adapted from earlier coinage of the Lichchhavis. The excavator's spade ought to find these coins. It will also be able to throw a lot of welcome light upon the history of Vaisali in the Gupta period. We all know that Samudragupta was born of the Lichhavi princess Kumaradevi but how much pleased we shall feel if the excavations reveal to us who was the father of Kumaradevi, and what precise position he occupied in the Lichchhavi administration.

I am aware that I have so far indulged in a number of speculations about the history of Vaisali in its different periods. This is not a safe procedure. But unless it is adopted, we cannot frame the problems, which explorations and excavations are expected to solve. I presume that many of my conjectures will be confirmed by fresh discoveries, though some may be disproved by them.

IDENTIFICATIONS OF ANCIENT SITES

One of the aims of the explorations and excavations near about Vaisali should be the identification of the places and Stupas mentioned by Fa Hien and Yuan Chwang. This work is not really so difficult as one may think at the outset. There can be hardly any doubt that the royal city or fort mentioned by Yuan Chwang must be Raja Vishal-ka-Garh; its dimensions tally with those given by the Chinese pilgrim and excavations have shown that it continued to be in occupation from c. 150 B.C. to the 5th century A.D. The Vihara or Sangharama in which Yuan Chwang sojourned was to the north-west of the royal city that is Raja Vishal-ka-Garh; it is probably represented by a portion of the Tila or Garh to the north of the Kharo-na-pokhra; this place is north-west of Raja-Vishal-ka-Garh, as required by Yuan Chwang's account. The Tower of Deposited

Bows and Clubs should be also in the vicinity of or a part of the same 'Tila' as it was half a mile to the north-west of the Gupta period city or Raja-Vishal-ka-Garh. To the east of Yuan Chwang's Vihara was the Stupa built to commemorate the place where Sariputta got enlightenment. Manikpur-Garh, which is almost due east of Yuan-Chwang's Vihara may once have contained the remains of this Stupa. The Stupa built over the relics of the Buddha when they were first brought in c. 487 B.C. should be to the further south of Manikpur Tila. Being opened several times, it has probably left no traces to the present times. According to Fa Hien the Vihara where Buddha was believed to be staying was in the great forest (Mahavana) to the north of Vaisali. We have still an area called Mahavana and it is almost to the north of Vaisali. Excavation and explorations should show whether Bhagwanpur was at any time connected with the Buddha, who was always addressed as Bhagavan. Bhagwanpur is due west of Raja Vishal-ka-Garha and may have been on the outskirts of Mahavana, which may have once stretched upto its boundary. On the occasion of his last departure from Vaisali, Buddha left the city by the western gate and walked for about a mile before he turned back to take his last view of Vaisali. This place was about one mile to the north-west of Yuan Chwang's monastery. The relics of the commemorative Stupa built over this place should be looked for other near the Asokan pillar or in the mounds locally known today as Bhimasena-ka-Palla. In proposing the above identifications, I have all along assumed that the distances and directions given by Yuan Chwang are correct. This assumption is rendered very probable by the significant fact that his statement is found to be absolutely reliable in the only case where it can be definitely checked. He states that the stone pillar of Asoka was to the north-west of the Vihara where he was staying. The Asokan pillar near Kolhua is exactly to the north-west of Kharona Pokhra, by the side of which was built the Vihara where Yuan Chwang was staying. Yuan Chwang's dimensions of the Royal city tally with those of Raja Vishal-ka-Garh. It would therefore be not an unreasonable procedure to assume Yuan Chwang's statements to be substantially true and to proceed to identify the places mentioned by him through further explorations and excavations.

It is interesting to note that the route of the Buddha's last departure, which I had tentatively fixed with the help of the account of Yuan Chwang has been confirmed by this year's excavations which tend to show that there was a concrete road passing from Raja Vihsal-ka-Garh via Chakramdas to Kolhua. I would like to offer my hearty congratulations to Mr. Krishnadeva, who was in charge of the excavations, for this discovery. His excavations have further shown that the site of the modern village Chakramdas did not continue in occupation long after the Mauryan period. It appears that at Vaisali, different sites were in occupation in different ages, as was the case at Taxila. Further explorations and excavations are necessary to unravel the mystery of the different sites.

NECESSITY OF FURTHER EXCAVATIONS

We should be all grateful to the enlightened donors, Sir Dorab Tata of Bombay, Mr. S. P. Jain of Arrah, Mr. Nirmalkumar Navalkha of Azimganj and Messrs. Rajendra Singh Singhi, Mohanlal Laldhar, Sohan-

ial Karnavat, Lajabhakta Choa and Dayanand Jain of Calcutta for their enlightend munificence, which rendered this Year's excavation possible. I have no doubt that in Kaliyuga greater merit is acquired by excavating a temple or Stupa than by building a new one. This year the Sangha could collect only Rs. 6000/- for excavations. But the results are very encouraging and next year we must collect at least Rs. 25000/- for excavations, so that we can make greater progress and discoveries.

It is very desirable that the Government should acquire the small Tila at Kahua, where the Asoka pillar is standing. The pillar itself is half buried still, and it is by the side of a Stupa mound, the top of which bears a Buddha image of the 9th century and the base of which goes down to the level of the tank, going back to the age of the Buddha himself. Both these are on the top of a mound, 6 to 7 feet in height and more than 1000 square feet in area. This plot in my opinion is the key site for recovering the history of Vaisali. I am sanguine that if this mound is acquired and careful excavations are carried out down to the level of the tank, we shall get a cross-section of the history of Vaisali from c. 900 A.D. to c. 300 B.C. The Union Government will probably claim this site as one of national importance. Let it then take immediate steps to acquire and excavate it. The usual excuse of want of funds may come forward. But if the Department of Archaeology does not squander its slender funds in restoring artistically third rate monuments like the surviving minar at Banaras, it can find money to acquire the above site and to excavate it. If the Union Government refuses to take steps in the matter early, the State of Bihar should come forward to do the needful.

We have also to identify the Vihara in the great forest occupied once by the Buddha and the different places where stupas were once built to commemorate the places where Sariputta had obtained enlightenment, where the second Buddhist council was held, and from where the Buddha took his last glance of Vaisali. Some indications are given of these places by the Chinese pilgrims, but they have yet to be definitely identified and confirmed by excavations. The Vihara of the Buddha was to the north of Raja Visal-ka-garh. I am inclined to think that it was located near the modern village of Bhagwanpur, which is to the north of the Garh. The name of the village may have been connected with the Buddha who was always addressed as BHĀGVAN.

DUTY OF VAISALIANS

I have so far referred to the great necessity of carrying on extensive excavations of Vaisali. I must now draw the attention of the villagers living near about Vaisali to their duties and responsibilities in this connection. They must treat even the smallest and the most insignificant antiquity of the place as a sacred national trust to be preserved with greatest care and solicitude. I regret to state that they have so far failed to discharge their duty. The walls of the old city-houses that were exposed by the excavations of Bloch in 1903-4 had all disappeared by the time excavations were started 10 years later by Spooner. The same fate was shared by most of the brick walls unearthed by this scholar. It appears that the modern villagers round about Vaisali seem to think that every excavation is started by the Government to afford them a golden opportunity to get bricks free of cost for a number of months. This is most unfortunate. Apart from the bricks

exposed by the excavations, the villagers will come across a number of minor antiquities exposed to view after the rainy season like coins, beads, seals, sealings etc. These also should be carefully collected with a view to depositing them in the local Museum. This museum can grow richer if the villagers cooperate in the above task. Vaisali was a provincial capital under the Guptas and it is, therefore, quite likely that hoards of Gupta gold coins may be found here. Unfortunately when such hoards are discovered, they are usually melted down and priceless historical material is thereby destroyed for ever. I would assure all the villagers that the Government of Bihar and the University of Patna will be always ready to purchase gold, silver and copper coins found at Vaisali at the same price which they are likely to get from the goldsmiths, who purchase them to melt them down. A report has reached me that sometime ago some golden inscribed plates were found at Vaisali, which were sold away for Rs. 14,000 to be melted down into gold bullion. If this report is true, there can be no doubt that the person who sold these plates and the person who melted them down have done the greatest disservice to the cause Vaisali, such thing must never be allowed to recur. It is not unlikely that copper plates, inscribed images or their pedestals may be accidentally discovered. All these must be secured and handed over to be religiously preserved in the local museum. The finder will no doubt receive a reasonable price and his name will also be noted down and perpetuated as the discoverer of the antiquity concerned.

PITFALLS FOR REPUBLIC

My predecessors have already dilated upon the valuable message of ancient republican Vaisali to the modern republican Bharata. The glorious example of ancient Vaisali shows to us how republican institutions are to be successfully worked and what pitfalls are to be avoided to ensure their prosperity. As long as the members of the Lichchhavi Parliament met frequently to transact the state business in harmony, as long as they did not allow their judgment to be warped by personal rivalries or individual self-interest, the republic prospered. As long as the Lichchhavi youths cultivated martial qualities and excelled in military exercises, as long as they were daring leaders in commerce and colonisation, their state was invincible. The citizens of a free republic like modern Bharata have to learn the difficult civic duty of combining respect for individual conviction with a regard for collective state decision as arrived at in the state Parliament. During the decline of Vaisali, the Lalitavistara tells us, that there was no respect for age nor for position; each citizen thought himself to be a Raja, not amendable to any higher authority, and thereby paved the way to the ruin of the state. There are indications in the contemporary civic and political life to show that a similar tendency is reasserting itself.

SHOULD MAJORITY ALWAYS CARRY THE DAY?

There is no doubt that democracy attaches greatest importance to the individual convictions of every honest citizen. But when these convictions tend to differ widely, a way has to be found. One way is to take the opinion of the majority. But sometimes on such occasions the minority feels that its opponents are ruling by mere brute majority. A way out of such a difficulty is indicated to us by the procedure of the Second Buddhist Council held at Vaisali, when 700 Bhikshus assembled there to examine

the validity of the points raised by the dissenting monks. For a long time no agreement could be arrived at, and the counting of votes did not seem to be the most fair, procedure. All the 700 Bhikshus then appointed a sub-committee of eight, 4 from the East and 4 from the West. This sub-committee then carefully considered the pros and cons of the different views and arrived at mature conclusions, which were recommended to and accepted by the main body of the Council considering of 700 Bhikshus. In the working of the modern Indian republican constitution both at the centre and in the states, occasions will certainly arise, when the decision of a question by mere majority, though perfectly legal, may appear as inequitable. On such occasions, we shall have to leave the matter for the decision by a representative committee of trusted and experienced elders. Their decision should be normally accepted by the Parliament.

PROBLEMS OF FEDERATION

Ancient Indian tradition is well acquainted with the working of republican constitutions. But ancient republics were small; compared to them the modern Indian Republic is a gigantic one in size and population. It is a Federation of seventeen Republican States which must live in harmony with one another if the Federation is to be a success. Here again ancient Vaisali will serve as the beacon light. When confronted with the danger of invasion from imperialistic quarters, Vaisali formed a confederation of the Mallas, the Videhas and the Vajjins, in order to present a powerful front. We in modern India have done the same by forming a federation of Republican States. We should however never forget that federation presupposes a willingness to sacrifice a part of our liberty for the welfare of the composite state. Federating units must have a large heart, banishing mutual jealousies and rivalries. Otherwise no Federation can work successfully.

FOREIGN POLICY

Above all we must avoid the drawbacks that brought about the down-fall of ancient Indian republics. The Lichchhavi republic fell primarily because its foreign affairs were in incompetent hands; the men at the helm of the affairs could not detect, that Vassakara the Minister of Ajatasatru, who had come as a refugee, was really a spy. It must be confessed that our foreign policy has been all along a weak one; Hindu states did not try to understand the resources of the Muslim invaders and neither the Hindu nor the Muslim states of medieval times took the preliminary steps of sending their spies and ambassadors abroad to London, Paris or Lisbon to form a correct estimate of the strength of the European powers which were contending for supremacy in India. We are now sending our embassies abroad. But a strong and independent foreign policy succeeds only when a nation is itself strong and not dependent upon others for its supply of aeroplanes, engines, tanks and cruisers. We have to make considerable leeway in this connection.

COUNTRY ABOVE PARTY

During the days of the decline of ancient Indian republics groups and parties were often formed in the Republican Assemblies and they spent their time and energy in bringing each other's down-fall and incidentally paving the way of an outside conqueror.

The party defeated in the Assembly would often seek outside help and thus seal the ruin of the state. Modern India which seeks to develop republican traditions and institutions may well carve on the gate of its Parliament the prophesy of the Buddha about the Lichchhavi Republic. The republic of the Lichchhavis, said the Buddha, will prosper as long as the members of their Assembly meet frequently, show reverence to age experience and ability, transact the state business in concord and harmony and do not develop selfish parties engaged in eternal wrangling for their narrow and selfish ends.

PANCHAYATS, FOUNDATIONS OF REPUBLIC

Republican constitutions could function successfully in ancient India because her population used to receive the necessary training in the working of the village Panchayats. The vast majority of my listeners today may not have much to do with the working of the Union or the State Parliament, but they are daily and intimately connected with the working of the village Panchayats. If they learn how to make them a success, there is no doubt that the working of the democratic institutions both at Patna and Delhi would be ensured thereby. The village Panchayats of ancient India were little republics which went on discharging their manifold duties even when monarchies were changing at the centre with great rapidity. They collected the land-revenue for the central Government and used to receive a 10% commission on their collections, which went a long way in meeting the expenses of their manifold nation-building activities. They did this work efficiently and were prepared to meet the odium of selling away the lands of those defaulters, who would not pay their state dues even after 3 years. The village Panchayats built and maintained the village roads and tanks and every able-bodied villager, whether rich or poor, deemed it an honour and duty to make his own contribution in labour for the work of communal welfare. Administration of justice was mainly a concern of the village Panchayats. If cases were directly taken to the higher authorities over the head of the village Panchayats, they were sent back to them. For instance, a relation of Shivaji took a dispute of his direct to that king. The latter enquired, 'Should I send your case to your village Panchayat or to an adjoining village Panchayat or to a Tehsil Panchayat?' It is interesting to note that he neither proposed to decide the case himself nor directed any of his Government officers to do so.

HIGH STANDARD OF INTEGRITY

The Government and public had high confidence in the integrity and capacity of the village Panchayats in the olden days. Ancient India for a long time stood high in the galaxy of nations because the character of the average citizen was noted for its purity and integrity. The Greeks were the political enemies of ancient Indians; yet Megasthenese and Strabo, have paid a high tribute to the Indian character. 'Indians have never been convicted of lying. Truth and virtue they hold in high esteem,' says Megasthenese in one place. This statement could obviously not have been literally true, but it shows that the cases of swindling must have been comparatively few. Strabo and Megasthenese both further state, 'Indians are not litigious. Witnesses and seals are not necessary when a man makes a deposit; he acts in trust. Their houses are usually unguarded.' How much one wishes that this may be true of modern India. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang

found the majority of contemporary Indians no longer following the gospel of the Buddha; many Buddhist Tirthas like Vaisali had become deserted and dilapidated. Yuan Chwang thus could not be suspected to be a natural admirer of Indians; he says "Indians are of hasty and irresolute temperament, but of pure moral principles. They will not take anything wrongfully and they yield more than fairness requires." How much one wishes that the U.N.O. had noted this impression of the Chinese traveller!

Muslim and Italian travellers and traders have paid equally glowing tributes to the high character of the contemporary Indian merchants. Al Idrisi, a merchant of the 10th century states, "The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to engagements are well known and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country, from every side; hence their country is flourishing." Marco Polo, an Italian merchant of the 13th century, says of the Brahmana traders of Western India "You must know that these merchants are the best in the world and the most truthful, for they would never tell a lie for anything on the earth." Ibn Batuta, another Arab traveller, pays an equally high tribute to the contemporary Indian character. Can we honestly say that we modern Indians deserve the high praise that has been so unstintedly showered upon the Indian character? I am afraid, not.

EFFORT NECESSARY TO REGAIN IT

It has to be confessed that there has taken place a great deterioration in national character during the last few hundred years. Successful lie, it has been observed, is the only defence of a tyrannised slave. It is, therefore, no wonder that our national character should have deteriorated during the period of slavery. Is it not now high time that we should make a determined and nationwide effort to raise the national character? It has to be admitted with sorrow & shame that one of the greatest victories for the gospel of truth and non-violence has been bismirched by the great deterioration in our national character that has followed its achievement. In a way this was also inevitable. Let the achievements of the Lichehavis in the past inspire us for a strenuous effort in this connection. The Lichehavis, who assembled in their republican parliament, reminded one of gods on account of the purity of their character and loftiness of their disinterested purpose. Let us all take a lesson from them. In our different spheres of life whether high or low, private or public, let none have an occasion to impeach us either for dishonesty or for incapacity. Strenuous and prolonged effort is necessary to achieve this desideratum. Here again Vaisali will give us the necessary inspiration. The Buddha began his spiritual life and discipline here at Vaisali under the guidance of Alara Kalama and did not give up his effort till he achieved his goal six years later. Let us begin our national tapasya for the purification and ennobling of national life and character with the Buddha, Mahavira and Mahatma Gandhi to inspire us. If we are true to their teachings and do not spare ourselves, we shall soon rise as a great nation.

LESSON OF COMMUNAL HARMONY

Communal passions are at present raging high; there is a conflict of ideologies; intolerance is raising its head every where. On such an occasion ancient Vaisali has its own ennobling message for us. Vaisali stood for

search after truth and toleration for honest opinions. Philosophical controversies (Shastrarthas) that used to be held in the court of king Janaka were occasions for the publication and discussion of divergent philosophical views and theories discovered after great spiritual endeavour. Every one was welcome to advocate his own views without let or hindrance. Later on Mahavira expounded his unique philosophy of Anekantavada, in which he pointed out how Truth has many faces and how we have to comprehend them all in order to get a true picture of the Supreme Reality. The ancient Vaisaliens followed this viewpoint in their daily life. They continued to pay reverence to their ancient Chaityas or places of worship, even after the rise of Buddhism and Jainism. Nay, we find the Buddha himself exhorting them to do so. Within the orbit of Vaisali, Vedic religion, Buddhism and Jainism lived together in harmony; the example of the general Simha, who gave up Jainism in favour of Buddhism, when he was convinced of its truth, will show that men could change their religion according to their spiritual convictions, without incurring any social displeasure or inviting any religious persecution. Vaisali knew how to combine respect for tradition with regard for new truths, and so Chaitya worship, Vedic religion, Buddhism and Jainism all lived side by side and in harmony. Different religious theories and ideologies have to learn today how to live in harmony with one another; for the world is wide enough for accommodating all honest views and convictions. They must, however, be honest and be prepared to extend that tolerance to others which they expect for themselves.

NEED OF SOCIAL REFORM

Hinduism has to set its house in order and many reforms are necessary in our social and religious structure if it is to support the weight of the republican Constitution. Vaisali always stood for reform; had it not been so, Buddhism and Jainism would not have prospered on its soil. It was also at Vaisali that the Buddha extended spiritual enfranchisement to women by admitting them to the Holy Order. As is, however, well known, Buddha was not enthusiastic for the change and gave his consent to it with reluctance. It would be, however, wrong to misconstrue this reluctance of the Buddha and to cite it as a proof of his unprogressive views. On the other hand we have to take a lesson from it. The Buddha knew that human nature, passions and frailties being what they are, there is an obvious danger in permitting imperfect and inexperienced young men and women of Buddhism was the deterioration in morals due to the too close an association of monks and nuns. Now India is rightly removing the Purdah and allowing women a number of facilities not extended to them before. This is all what should be. But let us take the precaution to see that the decencies of private and public life are maintained in new India, and liberty does not degenerate into licentiousness. Subject to this obvious precaution, we have to follow the noble example of the Buddha and remove immediately a number of disabilities and grievances of women. Polygamy has to be abolished, and the proprietary rights of women have to be enlarged both in the property of their parents and of their husbands.

MESSAGE OF VAISALI IN A NUTSHELL

Vaisali thus serves as a beacon light to us even after its fall about 1300 years ago. In the intellectual and philosophical spheres she stood for creative and constructive new effort and knew how to combine regard for new truths with love for old tradition. This is precisely what we have to learn today, if we are once more to rise. In the religious sphere, Vaisali stood for harmony, tolerance and understanding and we have to learn much from her in this respect. In the social sphere she stood for equality and fair play for all, irrespective of caste or sex. We in modern India have yet to achieve a good deal in this sphere. And above all Vaisali stood for republican traditions and showed that as long as the citizens of a republic cultivate martial qualities, maintain their supremacy in trade and industry, follow high standards of integrity and decorum in their public and private life and work their republican constitution in the true democratic traditions, a republic will continue to prosper and make her own contribution to the march of human progress. Let ancient Vaisali be our beacon light and there is no doubt that it will enable Independent Republican Bharata to make an all round progress in all the spheres of human life both here and hereafter.

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PUBLICATIONS OF THE VAISALI SANGHA

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